New Fiction

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plots and side shows. But all the people, with perhaps the one exception of Daniel's mother, and Meta, his first mistress, are straight out of a lunatic asylum: either criminally insane of nearly imbecile. At one crisis, Philippina screams, and "hastens toward the church, falls on her knees, and sinks her teeth with frenzied madness into the wooden pickets of the fence." It is an adequate symbolism: all the rest are biting fences, in one way or another. But there is undeniable power in the thing.

THE TIMBER PIRATE. By Charles Christopher Jenkins. George H. Doran Company.

THE woods, the fight of big interests for superiority, labor troubles among the workers, are not new ideas by any means, but always interesting. This does not mean that Mr. Jenkins's book is taken up entirely with these elements. There is a lively and interesting story in "The Timber Pirate." In it is to be found a vigorous study of a man—a man who the lumberjacks said had something inside him "burning him up and filling him with hellery"—a man who had the audacity to boast that he "prayed neither to God nor devil but asked both to give him a sporting chance." That is the kind of a man who is the important factor in this north woods game.

Louis Hammond, a young newspaper man, is involved in the mix-up by an offer of $1,000 a month to hold down a clerical job at the timber limits on condition that he keep his mouth shut and tell no one who sent him there. The mystery of it appealed to his adventuring spirit. Then Josephine Stone appeared at the limits in search of a person who shrouded himself in mystery by the use of three initials—"J. C. X." She was summoned because this person had something of interest to tell her regarding an old mine left her by her grandfather. The story, 318 pages of it, has much to it, and moves swiftly.

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND. By D. H. Lawrence. Thomas Seltzer.

THE Lawrence of these short stories is, on the whole, a more attractive incarnation than the later Lawrence of the spectacular, super-Freudian novels. These are spectacular enough, and the Freudian note is present, but he is assuredly a better artist here than in the more pretentious books. It is always, however, a pretentious artistry, here as in the others. He writes in the manner of a person who must talk in a loud voice, very rapidly and often excitedly. That manner is fatiguing; after a large dose of it one has the feeling of weariness that comes after listening too long to a pulpit thumping exhorter. But it is undeniably brilliant; trenchant, cutting deeply, after the fashion of a surgeon in search of a hidden trouble. And it always presents but one phase of the character under dissection, whereas the novelist should be able to show his people in more than one aspect. Even the murderer is not engaged in murdering all the time, and there are other facts about him that one needs to know besides the fact that he is a murderer. This volume contains ten short stories, of very even quality. The first attains the proportions of a novelette and is more broadly conceived than the others, which are of statutory dimensions and normal construction.

Foreign Books

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him to pick out that which we do not see; it also enables him to reveal the beauty of observations which we ourselves have made but forgotten. He fills the reader with gratitude, pointing out the neglected riches of his own treasure. He recalls the poignant anxiety of the parent who, when the child cries, waits, with pain, for the moment when it will catch its breath, "la reprise d'haleine," as Duhamel puts it. Which one of us who know children has not been often led to meditate on the possible superficiality of our adult appraisements when noting how impossible it is to hold the child's attention on the things which impress us most. (Duhamel's Bernard, when at the circus, is not at all struck by the evolutions of the man on the high trapeze, but insists on giving his attention to the insignificant cardboard man given away with every program.) Equally well observed is the promptness with which a child's interest may shift. "Zazou is tasting the lazy delights of the swing" (in the Luxembourg gardens). He gives himself over to it, crooning a song. He will stay there till night; he will stay there all his life. But no! Suddenly he exclaims: "Enough!" He insists on getting down; he must go elsewhere. One does not have to wait till one reaches the age of Barnabe (an adult) "to experience causeless fatigue, caprice and sudden boredom."

I have said that Duhamel's attitude is not scientific. This does not mean that his observation is inaccurate nor that it is superficial. He describes the great experiences of the little child, such as tasting everything, learning to walk, imitating the work of adults and so on. He also describes the first manifestations of his passions: self-consciousness, pride, pity, friendship. In many a case Duhamel gives evidence of much penetration coupled with a gift of presentation which drives his observation home with much pleasure to the reader. I quote, as an example of this, a passage shedding much light upon the physiological stages of a child's growth, more particularly that of his eye and mind. "Perspective is a convention held in honor by highly developed civilizations. The little man lives in a space having but two dimensions. This space has breadth and length, but no depth; it is scarcely more than a surface. All things appear painted on a screen; the eye, lacking impulse, seeks hardly to penetrate further, the hand shoots forward to seize. . . . It is in the direction of its depth that we discover the world. The little fellow's space acquires its third dimension as it were by slow biddings. At first timidly, then with a boldness that grows with every day, the eye sets out upon the conquest of the waste. It pushes off the back drop further, ever further. The hand, having given up, no longer reaches out. The time comes when the little fellow can see even to the stars and, still unsatisfied, searches further yet. This is a rapid development: At the age of fifteen months he cries out, as he looks at the heavens, "Oh, the lamp!" A year later he says most correctly, "Oh, the moon!" By that time he has already been reconciled to do without a great many things."

Such passages as these show that if Duhamel is not literally scientific, his observation is none the less acute and searching. For the intellectual curiosity, which is the prod of the scientist, he substitutes the no less enlightening spur of the heart that loves.